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on the Town

Purple Tree Shades Many a Secret

By John Pagones

TIL DIETERLE was taking a break when I walked into the Manger Hamilton's Purple Tree the other evening. Since I was alone the hostess placed me in an inconspicuous spot at a table near the wall.

I ordered a drink and the waitress brought it along with a large bowl of popcorn. I think it was yellow, but I could never tell because the



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place is so dark. Funny thing is, there are plenty of lights here, but they're the darkest lights I've ever seen.

The waitress hovered around me solicitously, then went and returned with a plate of steaming hot cocktail Vienna sausages. "Do you serve these to everyone?" I asked.

"Yes, sir," she said, "that is until we run out." She asked how everything was going, then went through the same routine with another man who also was alone. Before the evening was over, some three hours later, the busy waitress had taken under her wing five

patrons who were seated alone and given them beyond-the-line-of-duty treatment.

THREE SEATS AWAY, a man struck up a conversation with me. He was from Westchester, N. Y., down here on a business trip and he complained that the worst part of his business was being away from his family. A large city can be a mighty lonely place, he kept on reiterating.

In the background, the canned music was piping "A Foggy Day," with the violins playing pizzicato. A woman across from me said to her escort, "Oh, isn't that lovely!" I bet she likes pizzicato on artichokes, too.

Finally, Til Dieterle appeared at the piano. Right away she sailed into "Hello, Young Lovers," "Have You Met Miss Jones?" "Alone Together" and "Time Was."

There's no nonsense here. She plays one song, then breezes immediately into another song. She tries no variation, no ruminations, no exploring of the theme.

LATER ON in the evening I talked with her, wondering among other things to myself about this method of "playing." But before I knew what had happened, I found I was the interviewee. Between her and the gentleman from Westchester, I gave away all of my secrets from age 17 until I was discharged from the Army.

The only thing I learned from Miss Dieterle, who's mighty easy on the eyes, is that she comes from the West Coast, that she has apartments both in Los Angeles and New York City, that she's a tall 5 feet 4 inches, and that she has recorded four albums for United Artists.

I know the lady is missing out on her true vocation, working for the CIA.

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